

**Portraits of a Seventeen-Year-Old Girl**

Lily Benig

The voice of an angel,  
the voice of a mime.

I *cannot* tell you what she said  
you must help.  
Clearly, you must.

Hell is a long way off but I try to make it special for you.

Thin tights and red lines and  
red tape without escape,  
I gave her time.

The girl is a dime but she won't meet my eye,  
I cannot contain, deep in my head and my feet  
A look one of a kind.

A smile elicits a smile companion  
but the second, with the strength of straw,  
is worrisome.

I promised to love her all my life  
but fear has enticing assistants.

Rips and tears and screams and tears  
I can't see out -- today is great  
Please see your words are an eyesore  
I can't won't no no no not  
And his smile takes me away  
But the voice allows nothing  
She ALWAYS wins.

A roller coaster without in between,  
attempts to protect and to help,  
falling flat.

I swore I would save you on my life I would save you  
I swore the tempest would leave and leave you  
and leave me  
and leave you and me in that same place  
but this time I'd do you right.

She stands beyond my conception of limits  
She stands alone beyond my limits  
She stands alone  
She stands

Half a flower worth half my time  
Won't amount anyway;  
I'll give her a ride.

Her knife in my side,  
and mine in hers.

My friend is a wonderful listener  
but understanding is flighty  
and the smile means she's alright.  
Alright?

She sometimes wins.

This marks the one. Two marks the twelve.  
Everything before has never existed.

I love; it's enough.  
And the bird can be free.